HOW I VIEWED THE NIGHT. OTHERS, I'm SURE, SAW IT DIFFERENTLY.

READ FROM COBB 6/29/20

The Night Before Graduation – 1973

In the early 1970's Graduation Weekend began on Friday night with a sit-down dinner for the parents, graduates and faculty in the two school dining rooms. That was followed by coffee on the steps of the Library and then Prize Night in Bingham Auditorium. The formal Graduation, with the awarding of diplomas, commenced at 11 on Saturday morning in Graduation Courtyard, the area behind CPT that was enclosed by the two Gyms (Old & New) and the back (north) wing of CPT. The presentation of various awards at Prize Night didn't take too much time and the event concluded around 9:30, when everyone went his or her separate way before reconvening the next morning.

After Prize Night in 1973 a number of mostly young faculty assembled at Jerry and Anne Romano's apartment on HDT2 for a small celebration. The Seniors had their own (unsanctioned and illegal) celebration planned and almost the entire class gathered at Daveluy's, a local bar and restaurant located on Echo Lake Road and within walking distance of Taft. The legal drinking age in 1973 was eighteen, but not all the Seniors were of that age. That fact didn't stop them all from going to Dav's shortly after the festivities in Bingham had ended. The first phone call from the Seniors to the faculty in the Romano apartment came around 11 p.m. The caller, Joe (not his real name, of course), invited the faculty to join the Seniors down at Dav's; we declined. The next call came around 11:30 and again Joe requested our presence; again we declined. The third call from Joe came shortly after midnight. Because the background noise at Dav's was loud and pretty rowdy, we decided that we should go down to the bar and safely shepherd the Seniors back to Taft. We were so responsible!

Unbeknownst to us, the Senior girls were supposed to check in at their dorms at midnight. Susan Everett was in charge of Congdon House and when the Senior girls were absent from that midnight check Susan did a little detective work and discovered a rumor that all the Seniors were down at Daveluy's. Susan called Don Oscarson, the Dean of Students, to tell him that her girls were missing and probably down at Dav's. Oscie gathered Rod Maynard, the Assistant Dean of Students, and Jol Everett, Susan's husband, and the three of them drove down to Echo Lake Road.

As those of us in the Romano group (Tim Briney, Dick Cobb, Jerry Romano et al) made the turn from Main Street onto Echo Lake Road we noted a car parked on the right side of the road and three individuals in heated discussion on the sidewalk. Two of those individuals we tentatively identified as two Seniors, Scott and Robin (not their real names, of course); we weren't sure who the third person was. We continued on, parked on the side of Echo Lake Road, and walked as a group to the parking lot of Daveluy's. At this exact time a car pulled into the parking lot, stopped in the middle of the lot, and Mr. Oscarson emerged from the driver's seat. His first words to us were, "If you knew about this, you're fired!" He then confronted some of the Seniors who were hanging out in the parking lot. One of them, Steve (not his real name, of course) foolishly said, "You can't do anything to me – I'm eighteen and a Day Student." Oscie's response to this was, "I never liked your father much and I don't like you!" (Steve's father was a member of the Taft Faculty.)

Mr. Oscarson then went into the restaurant and bar. The Seniors were diving out windows and doors, locking themselves in the bathrooms, and hiding under the tables. Oscie stormed through the restaurant, creating such an uproar that the Manager of Daveluy's confronted him and demanded to know what the hell he thought he was doing. Oscie's response to that was, "I just went through your kitchen and if you get in my way I'll have the Health Department down here tomorrow and you'll never be open again!" The Manager said, "Go wherever you want!"

The Romano group drove back to Taft and little by little the Seniors made their way up the hill to the School. It was around 1:30 a.m. by now and I was selected by my peers to go to the Dean's Office to determine what our current employment status was. I was chosen for this assignment because technically I, as Chairman of the Classics Department, was Oscie's boss. This was dubious reasoning at best: Oscie was the Dean of Students and had been a teacher at Taft for twenty years while I was in my fourth year. Nevertheless, I made my way to the Dean's Office. Oscie was on the phone when I arrived, so I lit up a cigarette and sat down on the couch. Oscie was laughing loudly, as was his wont, and after a few moments it became clear to me that he was talking to the Headmaster. "What are we going to do?" Oscie laughed into the phone. "Not have Graduation?" I deduced that we were not going to be fired and, after Oscie finished his conversation with Lance Odden, I decided to not even raise the subject.

At this time Scott, one of the two students we had seen as the Romano group was driving to Dav's, appeared at the door of the Dean's Office. He complained about how Mr. Oscarson had treated his girlfriend Robin when Oscie confronted them as they were walking back to Taft from Daveluy's. (You didn't have to be a rocket scientist to deduce that Oscie had been the unidentifiable individual with the two kids at the top of Echo Lake Road.) It didn't take much time before Oscie lost his temper. He picked up Scott and (literally) threw him out of his office. Scott's feet never touched the ground as he flew through the anteroom to Oscie's office and landed in a pile in the main corridor. (Oscie, a large and strong man, was a boxer when he was in college at Yale.) I left the Dean's Office quietly and made my way back to CPT.

Back in CPT things were somewhat rowdy, but not too bad. Tim Briney and I walked through the floors of CPT (Mostly the 2nd and 3rd floors since that's where the Seniors lived; the 4th floor was all Upper Mids and they, like the rest of the Undergraduates, had finished their final exams and had left for Summer Vacation. The only non-Seniors left on campus were the 1974 School Monitors, who were there to hand out the programs at Graduation.) telling the Senior boys, "Go back to your rooms, be quiet for the rest of the night, and in all likelihood you'll graduate tomorrow." This seemed to work fairly well, although we didn't know (nor did we care) what they were quietly doing back in their rooms.

Word reached us that the roof was coming off Congdon House and that the Senior girls there were out of control. Tim and I decided that since we'd had so much success calming down the boys in CPT, we could heroically do the same in Congdon. We headed down the CPT stairway on our way to save the day! Oscie was sitting on a chair in Lincoln Lobby, laughing loudly. He explained to us that he had been sitting there, to make sure none of the boys tried to go out of the dorm again, when Sam (not his real name, of course), a Senior, showed up, coming from HDT, where he was living as a Corridor Monitor. Oscie asked Sam what he was up to and Sam replied that all the Seniors were meeting down at Dav's and he was heading off to join them. Oscie politely informed Sam that the Seniors (not quite all of them, apparently) had indeed gathered at Dav's, but that they had all returned to Taft long ago. He convinced Sam to return to his dorm and to go to sleep. Oscie, in less than two hours, had now gone from irate (at Daveluy's) to jocular (on the phone with the Headmaster) to irate (in his office with Scott) to jocular (in Lincoln Lobby with Sam). (1)

Tim Briney and I continued on to Congdon House and went to the Everetts' apartment. Susan answered our knock, and it was obvious that she had been crying and was very upset. The Senior girls were blaming her for having called Oscie at the midnight Check and, hence, "Mrs. Everett was the reason why they were not going to graduate tomorrow." Tim knew exactly what to do: he went to the liquor cabinet, filled a tall glass with gin, threw a few ice cubes in, waved a tonic bottle over the glass, and told Susan, "Drink this!" Tim and I then headed out into the dorm to calm the Congdon girls down, as we had so successfully done with the boys in CPT. We met Jol Everett, who was headed back to his apartment. Jol was angry. He said he had been on the second floor dealing unsuccessfully with a

dark-haired girl who was sitting in a window that was facing Mac House, and he had been very tempted to push her out that window. We also learned that Robin, Scott's girlfriend, was in great distress and crying in her room. Tim said he would go and talk with Robin, and I headed off to the second floor to find the dark-haired girl.

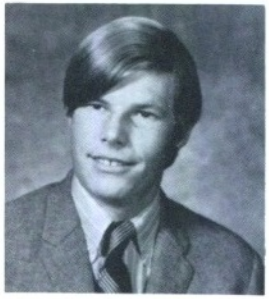
Shirley (not her real name, of course) was still sitting in the window facing Mac House. I had taught Shirley during the winter and spring terms (we had trimesters then) of 1973, so I knew her fairly well. I used the same ploy that had worked so well in CPT and told her that if she went back to her room and was quiet for the rest of the night, she would probably graduate tomorrow (which was now well into "today"). Her reply was, "I don't care if I graduate." My leverage was totally shot and eventually I came close to begging her to return to her room. I think she tired of me, because after a while she got out of the window and walked away. (2)

I returned to the Everetts' apartment and joined Jol and Susan, who was feeling considerably more cheerful after the gin and little tonic. We were still on our first beer when Tim appeared, somewhat agitated. He said he had Robin all calmed down when some girl he didn't know (Shirley, of course) barged into the room and said, "Don't believe anything he says!" That set Robin off again, and Tim gave up the fight. We had a couple of beers with the Everetts, and returned to our apartments in CPT around 5 a.m.

Graduation went off without a hitch at 11 that morning.

"Not his (or her) real name, of course."

Steven B. Potter



Pork, Porky, Pork-Chop
4 Years

Weekeepeemee Road
Woodbury, Conn. 06798
203-263-2653

L.S. Hockey '70
L.S. Football '70
L.S. Lacrosse
Varsity Hockey '71, '72 T, '73 T
Captain '73
Varsity Lacrosse '72 T, '73 T
Co-Captain '73
Dance Committee '72, '73
Food Committee '71, '72
Papyrus
Annual, Associate Board

Shirley E. Reid

Shirley
1 Year

Chestnut Ridge Road
Mount Kisco, N.Y. 10549
914-666-9531

Ski '36
Ballooning '73
Running, Various
Varsity Walking, All the Time
J.V. Walking, All the Time
Club Ice Hockey '73
Varsity Squash# 1
Swimming, Fall '72
Drinking — Yes

Robin L. Shafer

Germ, Munchkin, Topogegio
2 Years

56 King's Court, Apt. 6A
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00911
809-722-4801

Field Hockey '71,'72
Basketball '71, Captain, '72 Captain
Manager, J.V. Basketball '71
Class Committee '71,'72
Student Union Committee '71
Honorary Member of the
HO HO Club '71
Honorary Member of the FO FO Club
George Barbaresi Fan Club
C.H.S.R.F.A.N.